

Dear Permit Holder:

The purpose of this letter is to let you know about some changes in the way South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) responds to sewer system overflows, pump station failures, and bypasses of wastewater treatment systems or their components.

Since 1998, the Department has required utilities to report overflows and bypasses from their collection systems immediately upon discovery whenever:

- (1) any wastewater reaches the surface waters of the state, or
- (2) any wastewater poses a threat to human health or the environment, or
- (3) any spill or overflow exceeds 500 gallons.

Increasingly the public has expressed the desire to know when and where such overflows and spills occur. They have a right to be concerned about the quality of the waters in their neighborhoods and where their children play.

Since the utility is typically the first to know of an overflow, the Department is asking you to develop and implement a **public notification process**. As the responsible utility, you have more detailed information about the significance of the spill, its location, those impacted, and your clean-up and repair efforts. Providing this information to your customers is an appropriate public service and will portray your utility as open and responsive. A **Public Notification Program** needs to include the following principles:

- The utility will have a **Public Notification Program** for sewer system overflows of **5,000 gallons or more or that have the potential to affect public health**. The program can be tailored to address the specific overflow location, estimated volume, and potential impact to the public and environment.
- The utility will use an appropriate method for informing the public that may include press releases, door hangers, posting signs, or other accepted methods.
- The utility will use all methods available to determine a reasonable estimate of all sewer system overflows. These may include but are not limited to historic pump run times, assessment of pooled spill, historic flow data.

- The utility will include the following information in their notification:
 - Location of source of spill by street address or other appropriate method, e.g. manhole identification number.
 - Best estimate of the start time and end time of the spill.
 - Cause of the spill, if known.
 - Description of the source of the spill, e.g., manhole, pump station, force main, collection system line, trunk line, service line.
 - The ultimate destination of the flow, e.g. surface water body, storm drain to surface water; include name of receiving water body.
 - Corrective actions and clean-up methods used.
 - Name and number of a contact at the utility for further information.
- The utility will continue to report all sewer system overflows to SCDHEC meeting any of the three criteria listed in the second paragraph of this letter.

As the state's public health agency, it is our responsibility to provide additional public notification when we become aware of a potential health or environmental threat. The Department plans to issue press releases about the overflows and spills reported to us in those cases when a utility does not have a notification program or does not provide adequate notification as defined by the principles of the notification program outlined above.

As a reminder, once you become aware of an overflow or spill from your system, you should call your local EQC Regional office as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the spill event. Within 5 days of the spill event, a spill report form must be submitted to the Bureau of Water's Water Pollution Control Division, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201. Forms may be faxed to (803) 898-4215. Copies should also be provided to your local EQC Regional office. Spill report forms are available as a PDF file on the agency's web site:

www.scdhec.gov/environment/admin/htm/eqforms.htm#Water (DHEC Form # 3685)

Please submit your **Public Notification Program** to my attention within 30 days of receipt of this letter. You should plan to begin implementation of your program once you receive the Department's approval. The Department stands ready to assist you in your efforts. If you have any questions, please contact your local EQC Regional office or the Water Pollution Control Division in Columbia at (803) 898-4300.

Sincerely,

Glenn Trofatter, Director
Water Pollution Control Division
Bureau of Water
SCDHEC